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ABSTRACT

This report discusses the findings of a survey of 45 supported employment providers that sought to identify potential barriers to supported employment services for persons with severe physical disabilities. Results are compared with survey results from 50 state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies. Key findings from the survey include: (1) the percentage of persons with severe physical disabilities served by the supported employment providers increased from 28 percent in 1989 to 30 percent in 1990; (2) the total number of persons with severe physical disabilities increased by 31 percent from 1989 to 1990; (3) persons with severe physical disabilities were less likely to be served in the individual placement model with supported employment providers compared with the percentage reported by state VR directors; (4) 10 percent of providers were working concurrently in segregated settings and in integrated, supported employment programs; and (5) barriers to supported employment include transportation issues, lack of personal care services, and federal requirements. The need for federal supported employment regulations to be modified and support service resources to be expanded is discussed. Appendices include the survey instrument and a list of service provider respondents. (Contains 22 references.) (CR)

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# Supported Employment for Persons with Severe Physical Disabilities: Survey of Service Providers

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Training and Research Institute for People with Disabilities
Children's Hospital Region

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# Supported Employment for Persons with Severe Physical Disabilities: Survey of Service Providers

**December, 1991**


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**Acknowledgments**

## Acknowledgments

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This study was funded in part by grant #6008745439 - 89 awarded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation (OSERS), to United Cerebral Palsy Association, Inc. (UCPA, Inc.). The opinions expressed in this study are exclusively those of staff from the Training and Research Institute for People with Disabilities and UCPA, Inc. No official endorsement by RSA or OSERS should be inferred.

## Supported Employment for Persons with Severe Physical Disabilities: Survey of Service Providers

### Executive Summary

Since its inception, supported employment programs have provided employment opportunities for persons who, in the past, would have had trouble finding employment, because they require ongoing supports in order to maintain a competitive job. The Training & Research Institute for People with Disabilities, in collaboration with United Cerebral Palsy Association, Inc., conducted a survey of 45 supported employment providers as well as a survey of Supported Employment Directors in the 50 state VR agencies to identify potential barriers to supported employment services for persons with severe physical disabilities. These included: eligibility determination, funding for long term supports, personal care supports at the job site, transportation services, rehabilitation technology services, the Title VI-C regulations, and other potential barriers. This report summarizes the findings from the survey of supported employment providers.

The 45 providers were nominated from the earlier survey of state VR staff as potential supported employment providers for persons with physical disabilities. Each provider in the final sample met a minimum criterion of employing at least five persons with severe physical disabilities during the past two years.

Key findings include:

- The percentage of persons with severe physical disabilities served by the supported employment providers increased from 28% in 1989 to 30% in 1990;
- The total number of persons with severe physical disabilities increased by 31% from 1989 to 1990;
- Persons with severe physical disabilities were less likely to be served in the individual placement model (56% of the total) compared with the percentage reported by state VR SE directors (85%);
- Ten percent of the sample were working concurrently in segregated settings and in integrated, supported employment programs.

Clearly, the programs in this sample were much more experienced than the average supported employment provider in serving individuals with severe physical disabilities. This is underscored by the fact that 30% of their population had severe physical disabilities, compared with 5.6% as reported by state VR staff.

The complete report includes a discussion of potential reasons for the smaller individual placement rate reported in this survey compared with the survey of state VR directors. One possible explanation is that utilization of group models may increase with a higher percentage of individuals with severe physical disabilities (partly due to efficiencies in providing related services such as OT, PT). Still, the majority (60%) of the providers surveyed reportedly use only the individual placement model of supported employment.

Alternatives to the concurrent utilization of integrated and segregated employment need to be investigated. Providers reported that they often resort to combined schedules for persons who

have only part-time jobs yet need full-time schedules. Volunteer work or recreational/cultural activities in integrated settings may be more appropriate alternatives.

Issues related to support services include:

- Transportation issues continue to present major barriers to employment for persons with severe physical disabilities;

- The major impediments affecting rehabilitation technology services were funding problems or a lack of resources;

- Only one-third of the respondents had provided personal care services to individuals in supported employment;

- In some cases, the need for PCA services precluded use of the individual placement model; and

- Providers have difficulty identifying ongoing support resources for persons with physical disabilities.

The lack of provider experience with PCA services at the job-site raises some interesting questions. These providers presumably have more experience than the typical supported employment provider at serving individuals with severe physical disabilities, and yet, only one-third had experience with PCA services at the work-site. It is possible that some individuals with severe physical challenges and ongoing PCA needs are screened out during eligibility determination. A related issue is the fact that some providers use group placement models with this population because it facilitates the provision of PCA services. Alternatives to this practice need to be investigated.

Specific findings related to the Title VI-C supported employment regulations were:

- (As with the survey of state VR staff) supported employment program staff (62%) were more likely to perceive the 20 hour minimum requirement as a problem than the job skill training requirement (36%);

- Other respondents noted that both the job skill training requirement and the 20 hour requirement may affect whether individuals with severe physical disabilities initially are determined eligible for supported employment; and

- The lack of post-employment services for persons closed in supported employment was viewed as a specific problem for this population, because it restricts access to specific services (such as upgrades in assistive technology or maintenance of previously purchased assistive devices).

The recently proposed revisions to the supported employment regulations (Federal Register, November 13, 1991) have amended the job skill training requirement and the 20 hour minimum requirement. Specifically, the job-skill training requirement has been removed and replaced with a more flexible requirement for supports on and off the job, which must be monitored at the work-site. The 20 hour per week requirement is no longer required at the time of job placement, but instead, must be achieved by the time of transition to extended services. Both of these changes provide more flexibility for persons with severe physical disabilities. However, the findings from this study indicate that this interpretation will continue to create problems for some individuals with severe physical disabilities.

Another revision with potential implications for individuals with severe physical disabilities is access to post-transition or post-closure services following supported employment closure. These services must be "discrete, individually determined" and "not duplicative of services provided during the extended services phase of supported employment" (Federal Register, November 13, 1991) to individuals in supported employment. Discrete services have not been specifically defined, but seem to allow for rehabilitation technology services , such as job station accommodations, assistive technology repair and maintenance, and upgrading assistive technology devices.

The need for ongoing support resources and designated state agency responsibility for persons with severe physical disabilities is apparent from the findings reported in this survey as well as from the survey of state VR agencies. In addition, access to assistive technology must improve in practice. In spite of reports that states are beginning to implement technology plans and provide funding for increasing numbers of persons with physical disabilities, in reality, these funds are not routinely available during the determination of employment feasibility and during initial employment (Simpson & Button, 1991).

To conclude, supported employment programs primarily served persons with mental retardation during the early phase of their establishment. Increasingly, individuals with other types of disabilities are being served, including those with severe physical disabilities. The development of supported employment services for individuals with physical disabilities brings an accompanying set of unique service needs and policy ramifications. As discussed, the federal supported employment regulations need to be modified and support service resources need to be expanded before a substantial number of individuals with severe physical disabilities are likely to enter supported employment nationally.

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## Supported Employment for Persons with Severe Physical Disabilities: Survey of Service Providers

### Introduction

Since the early 1970's, rehabilitation programs have demonstrated that persons with severe disabilities are employable (Kiernan & Stark, 1986; Rusch, Mithaug, & Flexer, 1986; McLoughlin, Garner & Callahan, 1987). Activities sponsored by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) in the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services and the Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD) in the Office of Human Development have encouraged the expansion of integrated employment opportunities for persons with severe disabilities, particularly supported employment (Bellamy, Rhodes, & Albin, 1986; Kiernan & Schalock, 1989; Mank, Rhodes & Bellamy, 1986; Wehman & Moon, 1988).

These federal activities emanated from research findings which documented that few persons with disabilities were entering employment. A 1984 survey conducted by Lou Harris Associates revealed that two out of three adults with severe disabilities were unemployed and that the majority would like to find work (IDC, 1985). It has also been reported that 60% to 80% of the 20,000 youths with severe disabilities graduating from high school each year will not find employment (Wehman, Moon, Everson, Wood & Barcus, 1988).

In spite of the recent political and fiscal emphasis on integrated employment, segregated employment or day programs remain the dominant service model for individuals with severe disabilities. For example, only 17% of the individuals served by a national sample of day and employment providers during fiscal year (FY) 1986 entered an integrated employment setting (transitional-training, supported, or competitive employment) (Kiernan, McGaughey, Schalock, & Rowland, 1988). Similarly, 86% of those served by state Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities agencies were served in segregated (work activity or sheltered employment) or non-

work (day habilitation) settings during fiscal year 1988 (McGaughey, Kiernan, Lynch, Schalock & Morganstern, 1991).

Approximately half of the persons served through supported employment nationally are functioning in the borderline to mild range of intellectual functioning (Kregel, Revell, West & Wehman, 1990). As a result, individuals with more severe disabilities who potentially could benefit from supported employment may be underrepresented. For example, only 4% of those placed into integrated settings during FY 1986 were reported to have cognitive impairments in the severe or profound range of retardation (Kiernan et al., 1988).

Furthermore, few individuals with severe physical disabilities have participated in supported employment (Bellamy, Horner & Inman, 1979; Kiernan, et al., 1988; Mank et al., 1986; Wehman, Wood, Everson, Goodwyn & Conley, 1988). The third National Employment Survey of Adults with Developmental Disabilities reported that only 3.2% of those placed into integrated employment during FY 1986 had a diagnosis of cerebral palsy (Kiernan et al., 1988). Wehman, Kregel, and Shafer (1989) found that 1.8% of the persons served in supported employment nationally during FY 1988 had cerebral palsy and 8.5% had traumatic brain injury, autism or other unspecified disabilities which potentially may have been physical in nature.

It has been estimated that 34-38% of the population with developmental disabilities have a severe physical impairment (Kiernan & Bruininks, 1986; Temple University, 1990). Thus, individuals with physical disabilities comprise a substantial proportion of the population with severe functional disabilities, many of whom typically would benefit from supported employment services and, yet, they remain a relatively small proportion of the total population served in supported employment.

Individuals with severe physical disabilities have unique needs that require a specialized array of job-related support services. For example, compared with persons who have cognitive impairments only, individuals with physical disabilities may have less need for ongoing job-site training and skill development and a greater need for ancillary supports, such as personal care

assistance, rehabilitation technology services, mobility assistance, job accommodations, etc. Preliminary data are now available from a three year demonstration project on supported employment for individuals with severe physical disabilities that was undertaken in Illinois, Alabama, and New Jersey by United Cerebral Palsy Associations. These data underscore the need for related support services as compared with onsite job skill training (West, Callahan, Lewis, Mast, Simek-Dreher, Rock, Sleight , & Meravi, 1991; Callahan, 1991).

The current study was undertaken to gather information that would amplify the following issues:

- the extent to which individuals with severe physical disabilities are being served in supported employment;
- supported employment models utilized for individuals with severe physical disabilities;
- potential barriers to supported employment eligibility for persons with physical disabilities as defined in the Title VI-C regulations;
- availability of long-term support funding for this population;
- availability of and funding resources for personal care services at the job site;
- availability of transportation services;
- utilization of rehabilitation technology services in supported employment; and
- additional barriers to supported employment which may affect persons with severe physical disabilities.

A two-tier approach was used for data collection. First, a survey was conducted with the supported employment directors from each state Vocational Rehabilitation agency. Second, a survey was conducted with supported employment providers who had been identified by staff from the state VR agencies as experienced in serving persons with severe physical disabilities. Results from the survey of state VR supported employment directors are described elsewhere (Kiernan, McGaughey, Cooperman, & McNally, 1991). This report focuses on results from the survey of supported employment providers and compares these findings with the earlier survey.



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## Method

Instrument

A list of 82 potential sample members was generated through the earlier survey of Supported Employment (SE) Directors in the 50 state Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies (Kiernan et al., 1991). These directors were asked to nominate up to five supported employment programs that may have placed at least 8 persons with severe physical disabilities into supported employment over the previous two years. These criteria were established in order to generate a sample of providers with expertise in providing supported employment services to individuals with severe physical disabilities. This experience was perceived as particularly relevant to agency staff members' ability to respond to policy-related issues (such as experience with the Title VI-C regulations, experience in providing PCA services at the job sites, etc.). Staff from United Cerebral Palsy Associations (UCPA) also nominated 22 UCPA affiliate supported employment programs. Thirteen of these nominees also were on the list generated by the VR directors. Hence, the final sample included 91 supported employment providers.

Staff from these 91 providers were contacted by telephone during January 1991 and screened according to their ability to meet the specified criteria. Preliminary screenings indicated that the minimum criteria of 8 individuals was too high to generate the desired sample size. Thus, the screening criteria were changed to a minimum of 5 individuals with severe physical disabilities placed into supported employment over the past 2 years. Of the 91 potential sample members, 48 met these criteria. These programs were located in 26 states. The state of Arizona had the largest representation (5 programs).

The survey instrument was developed by project staff at the Training and Research Institute for People with Disabilities (The Children's Hospital, Boston), in conjunction with United Cerebral Palsy Associations (UCPA), Washington, D.C. The survey and an introductory cover letter were mailed to the director of each supported employment program in early February 1991. These individuals were asked to complete the quantitative questions as completely as possible and

to expect a call from one of the study's research assistants within two weeks to schedule a telephone interview. Telephone interviews were conducted with staff from each supported employment provider, except for two that returned surveys through the mail. The research staff followed up the initial interview with calls to other relevant agency employees or to the initial respondent, if necessary, to clarify information.

Constraints to Inference

Respondents were told that the study focused on supported employment for persons with severe physical disabilities (identified as individuals with a primary physical disability as defined by P. L. 99-506, The Rehabilitation Act of 1986) who, because of these disabilities, require ongoing job-related supports (such as personal care assistance, communication assistance, job accommodation, rehabilitation technology, mobility assistance, etc.) in order to maintain employment in an integrated setting. For individuals with multiple disabilities (such as those with cognitive and physical disabilities), it may be difficult to determine whether the physical disability determines the need for job-related supports or whether it is the combination of disabilities that creates this need. This distinction is important only because the study focuses on the unique needs of individuals who need supported employment services because they have substantial physical impairments. The reader needs to keep in mind the complex interaction of multiple disabilities, which may make it impossible to attribute specific needs to one disability category.

Also, providers were asked to collect and report their own data, which may compromise its reliability. Independent verification of this information was not feasible given the available resources. However, the high response rate of 94% helps in validating the general profile of supported employment providers that serve individuals with severe physical disabilities.

## Results

Response Rate

Data were obtained from 45 of the 48 potential sample members. The overall response rate was 94%.

Participating Agencies

The survey included several questions designed to generate a descriptive profile of the respondents. The participating agencies served an average of 124 persons per day in 1990, with the smallest agency serving 3 persons per day and the largest serving 1,465 persons per day. Twenty-nine agencies provided this information based on actual data, whereas 16 relied on an estimate of the facility's daily census. The agencies that reported actual data had slightly higher daily census figures (an average of 132 persons per day) compared with those that used estimates (an average of 108 persons per day). These organizations had provided day or employment services to persons with disabilities for an average of 12.7 years, with the newest program operating for 1.5 years and the oldest for 41 years.

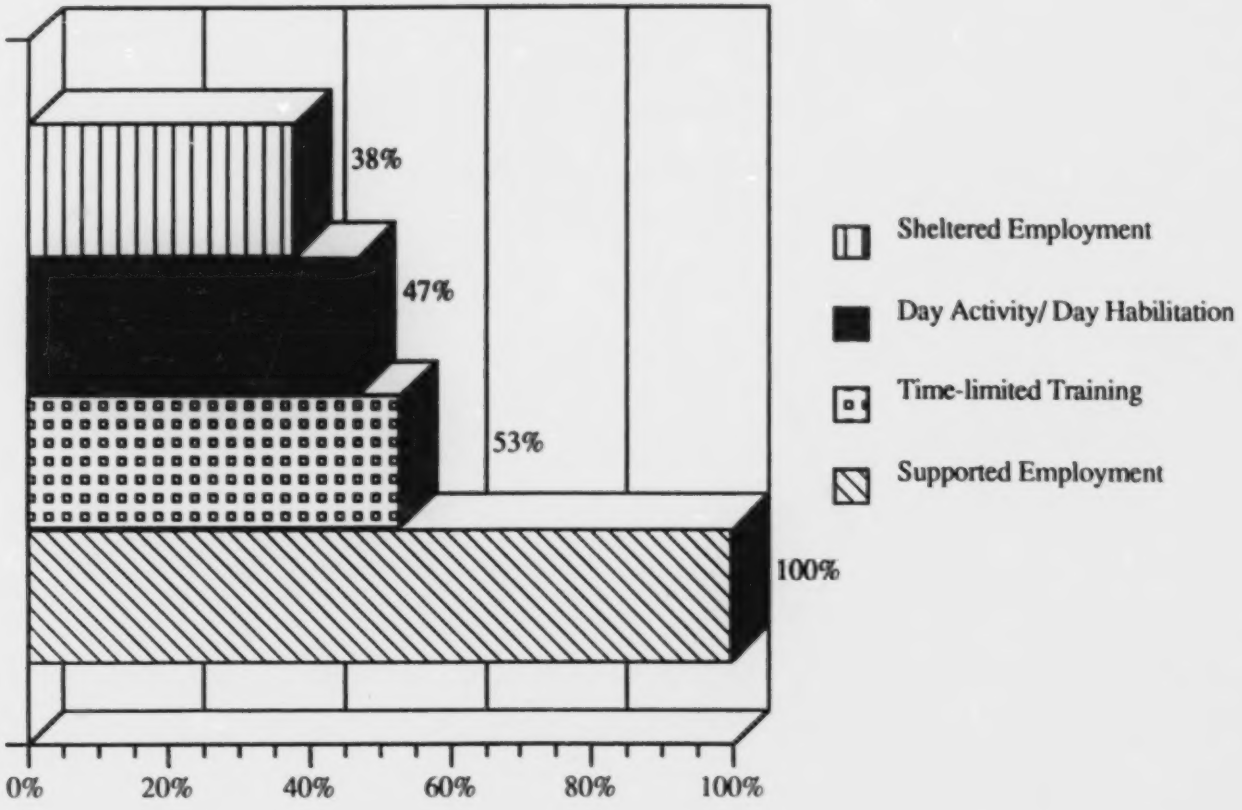
Services Offered

Figure 1 displays the profile of services offered by these agencies. All of the agencies provided supported employment, which was the focus of this study. In addition, 53% offered time-limited training services leading to competitive employment. Almost half of the agencies (47%) also provided traditional prevocational or therapeutic services (e.g., day activity and day habilitation). Fewer agencies (38%) provided traditional sheltered employment/work activity services.

Persons with Severe Physical Disabilities in Supported Employment

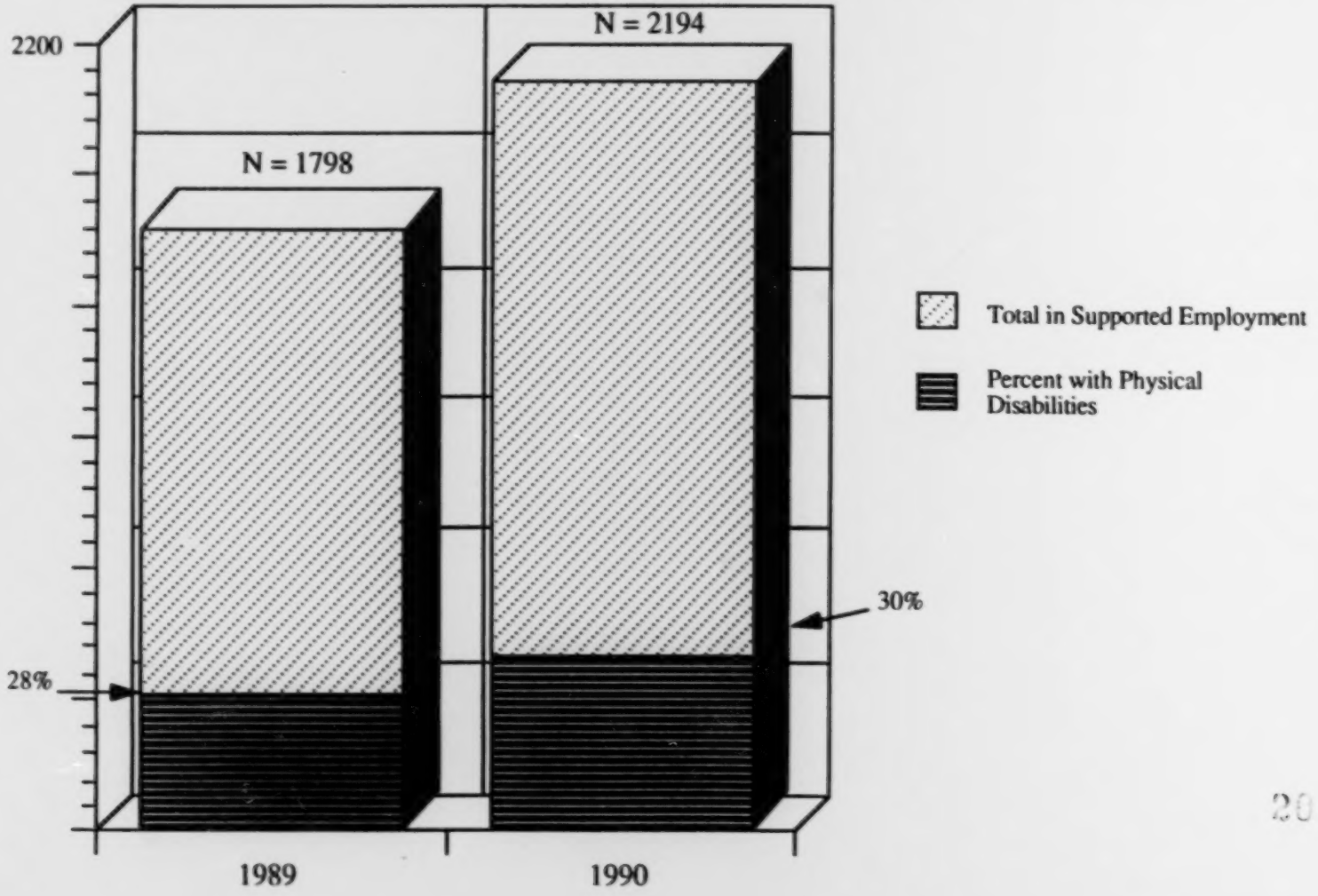
Respondents were asked to report the total number of individuals, as well as the number with severe physical disabilities, served in their agency's supported employment program during calender years 1989 and 1990. This information is shown in Figure 2, where the number of individuals with severe physical disabilities served is displayed as a percentage of the total

# FIGURE 1
# SERVICES OFFERED BY RESPONDING AGENCIES



# FIGURE 2

## PERCENT IN SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES



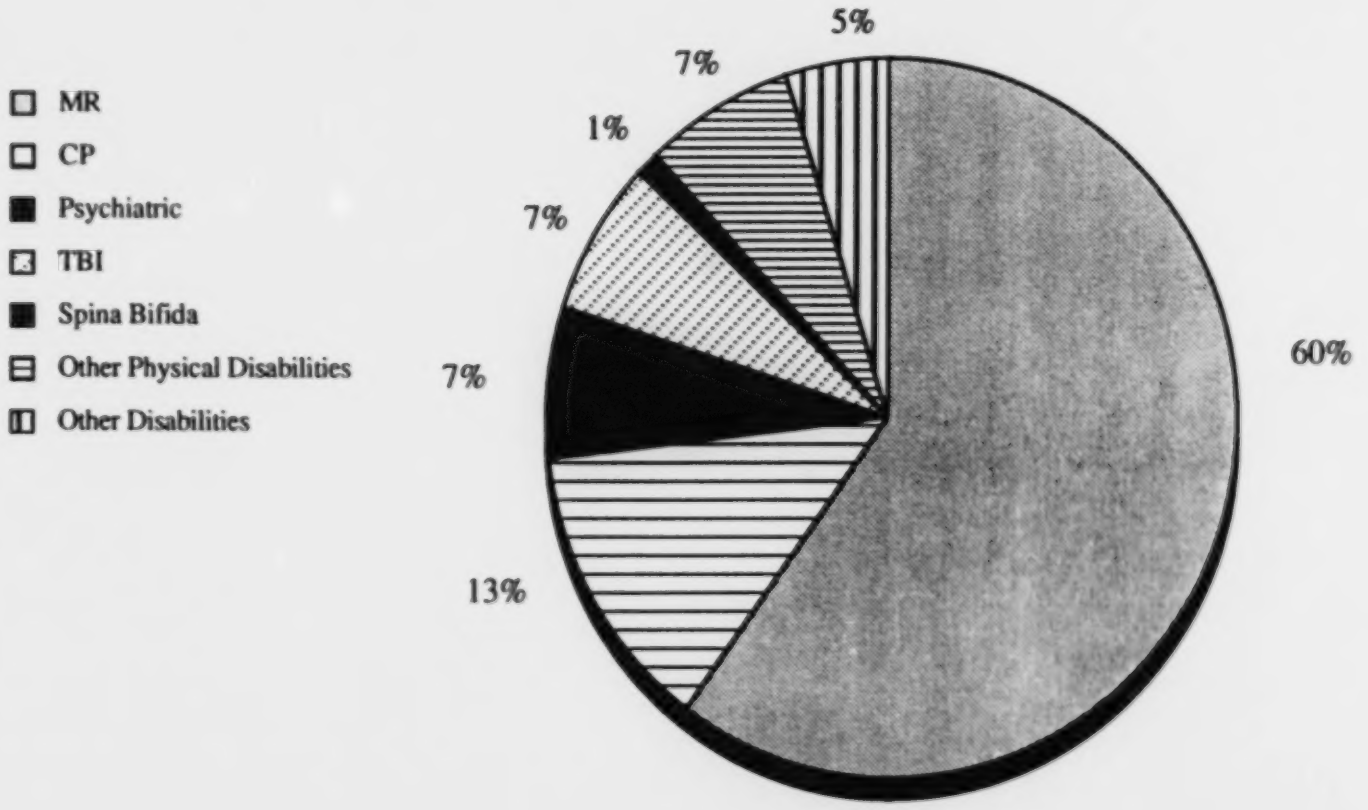
population served during 1989 (28%) and 1990 (30%). These providers showed a relatively strong specialization of services to persons with severe physical disabilities. This population represented approximately 30% of the total served in supported employment, which is more than five times the percentage reported in the earlier study of state VR Supported Employment Directors (4.5% for 1989 and 5.7% for 1990) (Kiernan et al., 1991).

The total number of supported employment participants reported by the respondents increased by 22% from 1989 (1798 persons) to 1990 (2194 persons). A similar, yet slightly larger, increase of 33% was reported for the sub-population with severe physical disabilities from 1989 (504 persons) to 1990 (662 persons). The average number of persons served in supported employment increased from 40 in 1989 to 49 in 1990. The smallest provider served 5 persons in 1990 and the largest served 260. An average of 15 individuals with severe physical disabilities were served in 1990, with the smallest provider serving 2 persons with physical disabilities and the largest serving 102.

Respondents also were asked to provide information regarding the number of individuals with severe physical disabilities who were new to the agency's supported employment program during 1990. A total of 261 individuals with severe physical disabilities, and an average of 6, entered supported employment during this period. Thus, 39% of the total population with severe physical disabilities served in supported employment entered these programs during 1990. A smaller number of persons with severe physical disabilities were terminated from supported employment during 1990 (51 persons or 8% of those with severe physical disabilities).

Respondents were asked to categorize their current supported employment population according to 8 primary disabilities: mental retardation, psychiatric, cerebral palsy, traumatic brain injury, spina bifida, spinal cord injury, other physical disabilities, and other disabilities. (The current total was slightly larger than the total served during 1990). Figure 3 reveals that (as with the population in supported employment nationally) the largest percentage (60%) had mental

# FIGURE 3
# PRIMARY DISABILITY OF INDIVIDUALS CURRENTLY SERVED IN SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT




( N = 2425 )

retardation, followed by persons with cerebral palsy, psychiatric disabilities, head injuries, and other uncategorized physical disabilities.

Traumatic brain injuries may or may not be classified as a physical disability, depending on the manifestation of the injury. Respondents were asked to determine this on a case by case basis. The categories that automatically were included in our description of a physical disability were cerebral palsy, spina bifida, spinal cord injury and other physical disabilities, although respondents determined severity based on the extent of the disability and the need for supported employment services. Some respondents reported that they serve individuals with severe physical disabilities who also have mental retardation, but in some of these cases, mental retardation rather than the physical disability was listed as the primary disability. This typically was due to the fact that funding for follow-up services is more readily available to persons with mental retardation. Thus, in some instances, the classification of disability is determined by funding streams. The "Other Physical Disability" category included persons with seizure disorders, dual diagnoses, speech impairments, multiple sclerosis, and orthopedic conditions. The "Other Disability" category was comprised of individuals with sensory impairments and learning disabilities.

Funding

Respondents were asked to indicate from a list of 8 potential funding sources which are utilized for the initial phase of supported employment. Figure 4 shows this distribution. The largest percentage (93%) access Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) funds, followed by revenue from state Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities agencies (64%). One-third of the agencies utilize the following sources: fees from consumers, Social Security Plans to Achieve Self Support (PASS) and Social Security Impairment Work Related Expense (IWRE) funds. Approximately one-fourth (27%) of the agencies acquire funding from the Department of Education, whereas fewer agencies (18%) access monies from the state Department of Mental Health. Even fewer obtain revenues from the Medicaid Waiver (18%), county/local governments (18%), or other state agencies (11%). More than one-third of the providers (42%) access funds from sources other than



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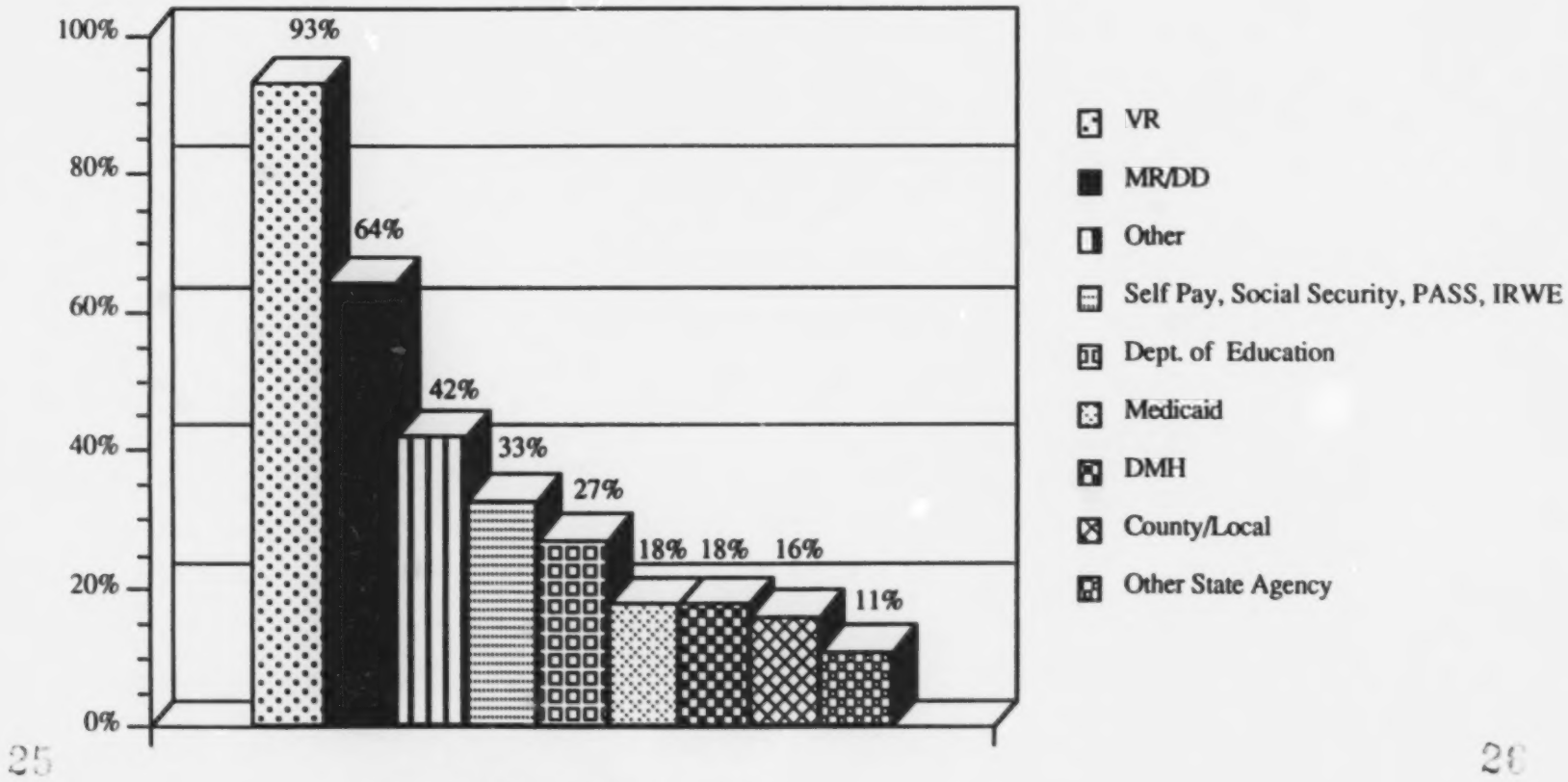
# FIGURE 4

# FUNDING SOURCES UTILIZED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT



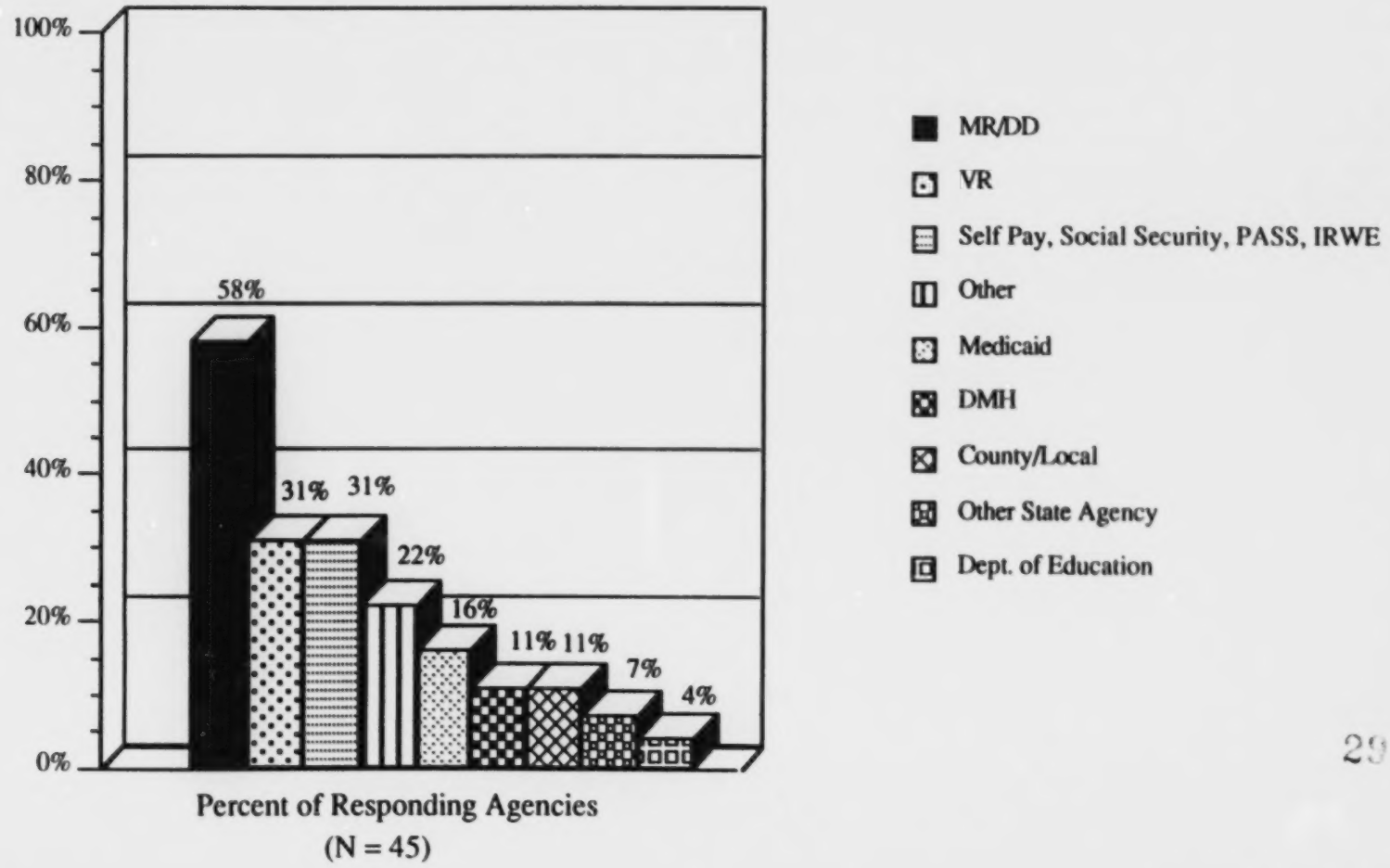
the list provided on the survey, including: fundraising, private donations, United Way funds, special federal grants, third party contracts, insurance companies, worker's compensation, and general funds from the agencies' ongoing budgets.

A corresponding question was asked regarding funding sources utilized to provide follow-up supports to individuals with severe physical disabilities. This information is presented in Figure 5. Significantly fewer providers (31%) obtain VR funding for follow-up supports compared with the 93% which use it for the initial phase of supported employment. The difference can be attributed to federal regulations restricting VR funding to 18 months per consumer. Some state legislatures have allocated line-item funds to VR agencies for follow-up supports. In other cases, state VR monies have been diverted from long-term sheltered employment programs to supported employment. More than half the organizations (58%) access state MR/DD agency funds to provide follow-up supports to this population, typically, for persons who also have mental retardation. As with the initial phase, approximately one-third (31%) of the providers use consumer dollars and Social Security funds for follow-up supports. Department of Education funds are used much less often (only 4% of the agencies) to provide follow-up supports (versus 27% for training services). Finally, almost one-fourth access other sources for ongoing supports, including: donations, fundraising, United Way, special grants, and absorbing costs into the agency's budget. Sixteen percent of the programs obtain Medicaid Waiver funds for ongoing supports.

Supported Employment Models

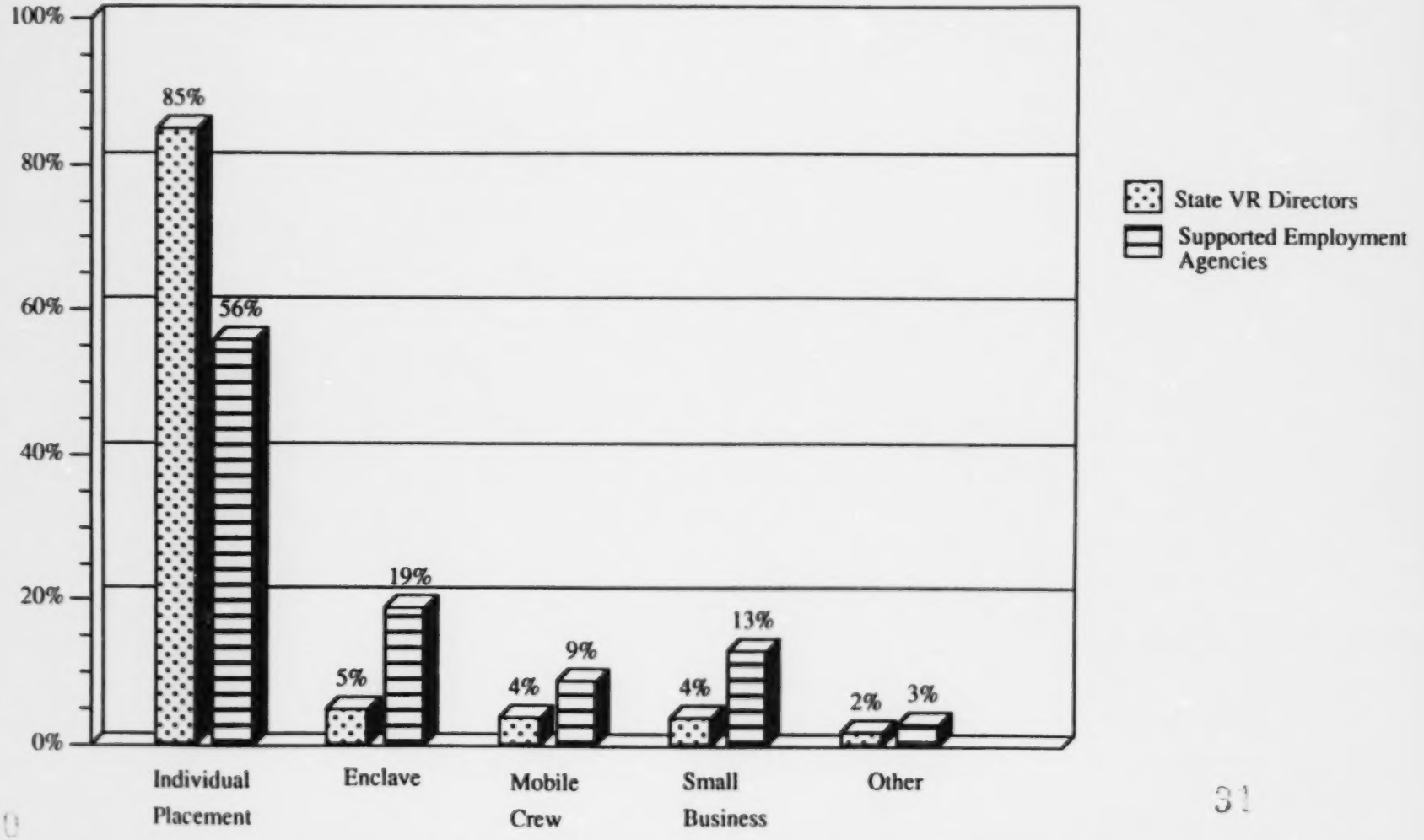
Respondents were asked to list the number of individuals working in one of five supported employment models: individual placement, enclave, mobile crew, small business, and other. Figure 6 compares these responses with those provided by the 50 state VR Supported Employment Directors. Although the responding supported employment providers used the individual placement model for the largest percentage of consumers (56%), this did not come close to approximating the 85% reported in individual placement by the state SE Directors. In contrast,

# FIGURE 5
# FUNDING SOURCES UTILIZED FOR ONGOING SUPPORTS FOR PERSONS WITH SEVERE PHYSICAL DISABILITIES




Percent of Responding Agencies
(N = 45)

# FIGURE 6
# SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT MODELS UTILIZED




Percent of Persons with Severe Physical Disabilities in Supported Employment

the supported employment providers reported a larger percentage of persons with severe physical disabilities in enclaves and small business ventures.

Relatively speaking, however, a fairly small percentage of facilities actually utilized models other than individual placement. The number of providers implementing each model and the average size of the various models was: individual placement: 40 agencies; enclave: 13 agencies, average size = 9 persons; small business: 7 agencies, average size = 11; mobile crews: 4 agencies, average size = 11. None of the group placements would meet the Title VI-C criteria for supported employment, i.e., which specifies that no more than 8 individuals with disabilities work in a single job setting. The largest enclave (N= 23) was much smaller than the largest mobile crew (N= 40) or the largest small business venture (N= 50). Four agencies reported that they provided other models from those listed: 3 persons were reported in cluster placements and the remaining 13 individuals were in volunteer work-experience positions. The volunteer positions would not technically fulfill the criteria for supported employment, as specified under the Title VI-C regulations or the more generally accepted definition of paid employment.

Concurrent Employment in Segregated Settings

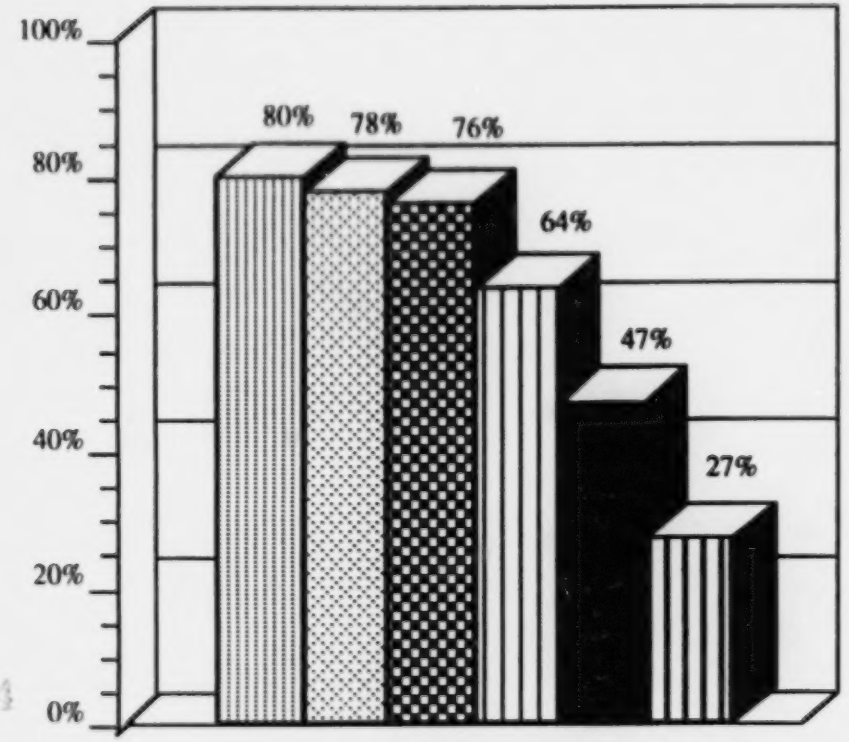
We were interested in determining the extent to which individuals with severe physical disabilities are working part time in supported employment and part time in a segregated setting. Respondents were asked to provide this information. Forty individuals with severe physical disabilities (7%) were spending part of their week in sheltered employment/work activity programs, and 19 supported employees (3%) were in day habilitation/day activity settings for part of the week. Overall, 10% were working concurrently in segregated and integrated settings. One respondent remarked that combining segregated and integrated employment is generally a temporary practice, depending on the reasons for each individual. Another noted that this occurs more often with individuals who have disabilities that are not of a physical nature.

Transportation Issues

Respondents were given a list of issues that may affect transportation services to supported employment job sites for persons with severe physical disabilities and were asked to indicate whether these had been problems. The list of potential issues was generated from responses to the state VR survey, which contained an open-ended question regarding transportation. Figure 7 displays the distribution across the 5 potential transportation issues. At least two-thirds of the respondents indicated that four of the issues were problems and almost half checked the remaining issue. More than three-fourths of the respondents indicated problems related to: 1) limited routes/proximity to work sites, 2) availability of public transportation, and 3) limited scheduling/incompatibility with work hours. The "other" category included three major issues: lack of available transportation in rural areas, limited funding for transportation, and unreliable transportation services. One respondent noted that there are no lifts on public buses in their area and that it is often necessary to reserve private transportation with a lift months in advance. Clearly, transportation still presents major barriers to employment for persons with severe physical disabilities.

Respondents were asked to identify potential strategies used to address the transportation issues noted above. Strategies related to limited routes/proximity of transportation to work sites, availability of transportation alternatives, and the lack of accessible public transportation clustered into three general categories. These included: 1) developing creative alternatives to the lack of resources, 2) generating systems advocacy activities to expand transportation networks and services, and 3) working with employers to restructure schedules or using job development strategies to find jobs close to residences. Specific alternatives that were mentioned as solutions to the lack of transportation resources included: utilizing families, linking with coworkers, utilizing residential transportation services, accessing program resources to provide transportation, linking with other disabled coworkers when feasible, using taxis, using volunteers,

# FIGURE 7
# TRANSPORTATION ISSUES FOR PEOPLE WITH SEVERE PHYSICAL DISABILITIES




Percent of Responding Agencies

( N = 45 )

- Limited Routes/Proximity to Work Site
- Availability of Public Transportation
- Limited Scheduling/Incompatible with Work Hours
- Lack of Accessible Public Transportation
- Availability of Private or State Contracted Transportation
- Other

developing grants to expand public transportation, and hiring drivers from the community (such as senior citizens).

Rehabilitation Technology Services

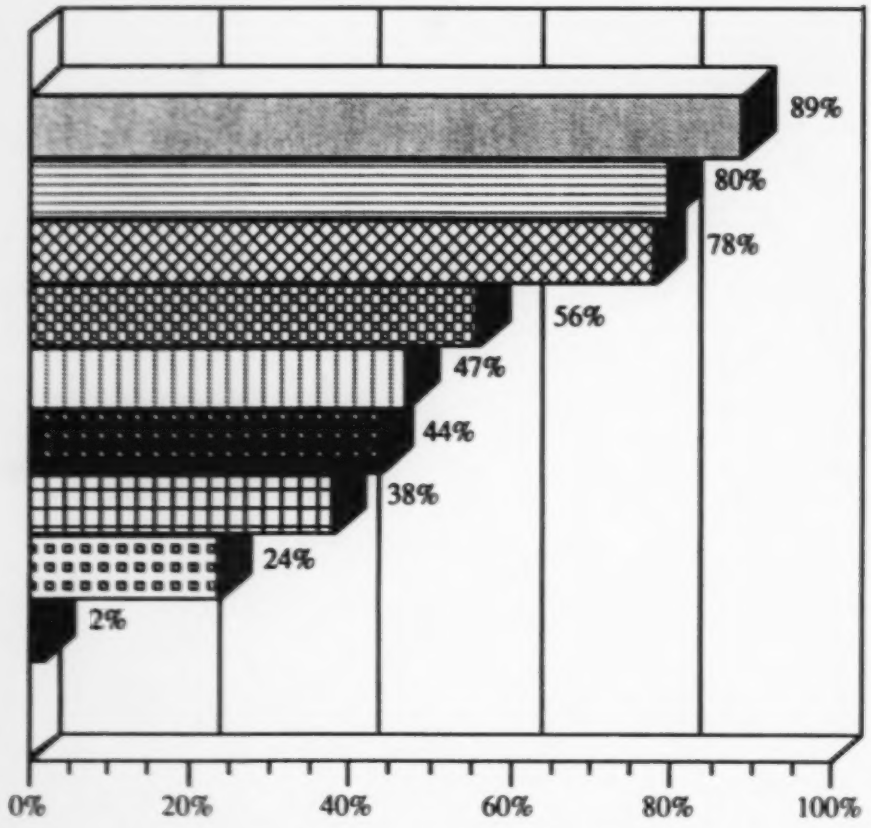
The questionnaire contained several questions related to the provision of rehabilitation technology services. Respondents were asked to indicate the types of rehabilitation technology services used at the supported employment job sites. These responses are presented in Figure 8. Work-station accommodations, job restructuring and job-site accommodations were utilized most frequently. Only one supported employment provider had no experience with rehabilitation technology services.

When asked to describe the types of professional services used, the largest percentage of providers (80%) had utilized rehabilitation engineers. More than half the respondents had used occupational therapists (62%) or physical therapists (56%). Fewer had accessed interdisciplinary rehabilitation technology centers (22%) or assistive technology databases (18%). Sixteen percent of the respondents also had utilized other sources of rehabilitation technology, including: speech therapists, a low vision clinic,various catalogues and assisstance from family and friends.

Respondents also were asked to indicate whether they had used any of three potential funding sources for rehabilitation technology services. Vocational Rehabilitation funds were used by the vast majority of respondents (73%). Fewer providers had supported rehabilitation technology services with Medicaid funds (38%) or with funds from other state agencies (22% reported Department of Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities or Department of Mental Health). Thirty-six percent of the respondents reported using additional sources for rehabilitation technology services, including: Social Security, private insurance, local school districts, foundation grants, federal grants, the employer, and their own agency resources.

When asked whether rehabilitation technology services were readily available or whether they had encountered problems obtaining these services, two-thirds of the providers (67%) responded that services were readily accessible. Table 1 reveals the state-by-state distribution of

# FIGURE 8
# REHABILITATION TECHNOLOGY USED FOR PERSONS WITH SEVERE PHYSICAL DISABILITIES




- Work Station Accomodation
- Job Restructuring
- Job Site Accomodation
- Equipment
- Communication Devices
- Mobility Devices
- Building Modification
- Prostheses
- None

TABLE 1

ACCESS TO REHABILITATION TECHNOLOGY BY STATE

| SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS | | VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION DIRECTORS | |
|---|---|---|---|
| State | Rehabilitation Technology Services Readily Available | Rehabilitation Technology Available Before Placement | Rehabilitation Technology Available After Placement |
| Alabama | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Alabama | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Arizona | | Yes | Yes |
| Arizona | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Arizona | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Arizona | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Arizona | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| California | | Yes | Yes |
| Connecticut | | Yes | Yes |
| Connecticut | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Connecticut | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Florida | | Yes | Yes |
| Georgia | Yes | Yes | |
| Idaho | | Yes | Yes |
| Idaho | | Yes | Yes |
| Idaho | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Illinois | | Yes | Yes |
| Illinois | DK | Yes | Yes |
| Illinois | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Iowa | | Yes | Yes |
| Massachusetts | | Yes | Yes |
| Minnesota | | Yes | Yes |
| Minnesota | | Yes | Yes |
| Minnesota | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Montana | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Nevada | | Yes | Yes |
| New Jersey | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| New Jersey | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| New Jersey | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| New York | | Yes | Yes |
| New York | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| New York | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| New York | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| N. Carolina | | Yes | Yes |
| N. Carolina | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Ohio | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Oregon | Yes | | Yes |
| Pennsylvania | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Rhode Island | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| S. Dakota | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Texas | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Utah | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Virginia | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Washington | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Wyoming | | Yes | Yes |

DK = Don't know

supported employment providers which indicated services were readily available. These responses are compared with responses from the state SE Directors, who were asked similar (but not identical) questions. Ninety-two percent of the state VR Supported Employment Directors indicated that funds were available for rehabilitation technology prior to placement in supported employment, whereas 88% noted that funds were available following placement. State SE Directors appear to be more optimistic than service providers regarding the availability of rehabilitation technology services.

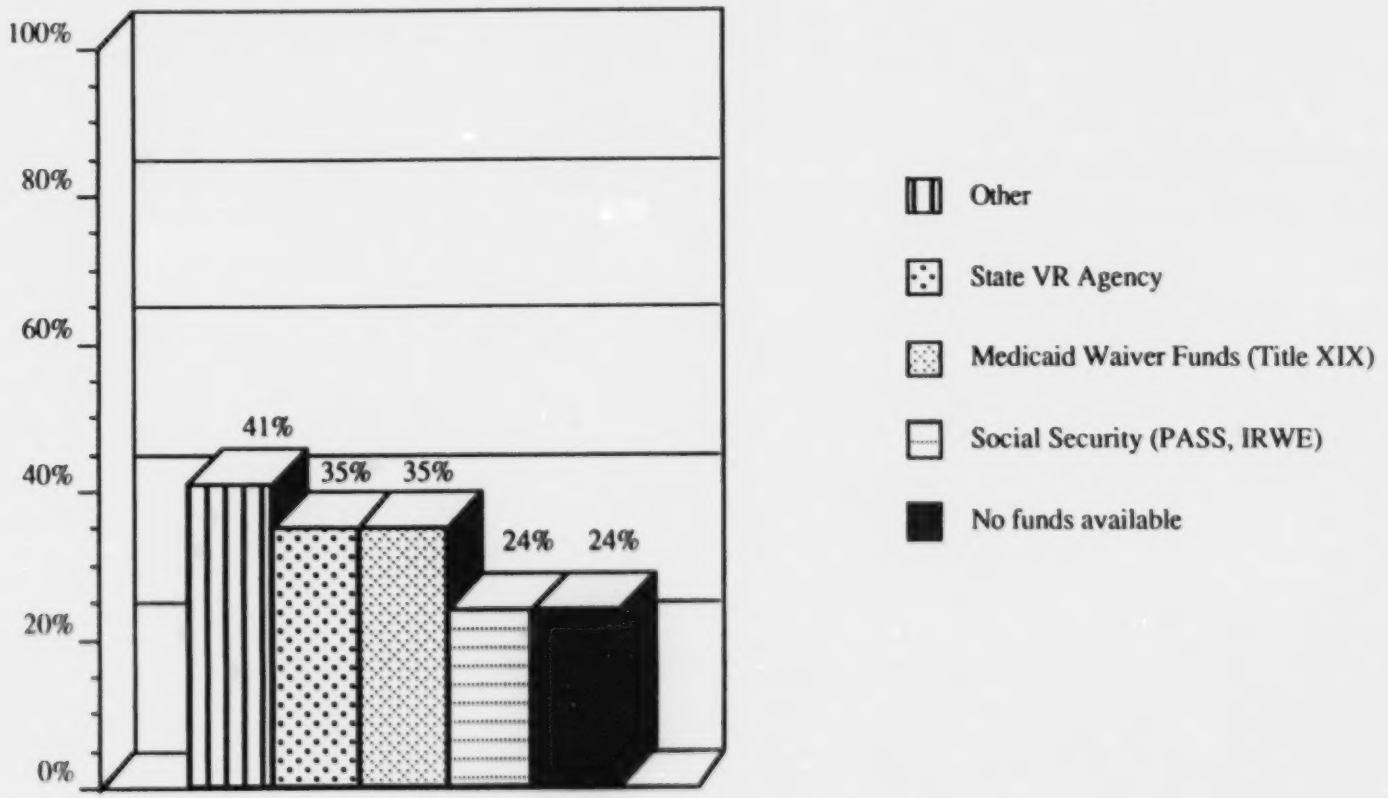
Of the 15 respondents who reported problems in locating or providing rehabilitation technology services, the majority (10) said that this was due to funding problems and/or lack of rehabilitation technology resources. One respondent noted that there is no rehabilitation engineer in the state and that someone currently drives in from out of state -- 6 hours away. Another mentioned receiving "terrific assessments and great recommendations" from a rehabilitation technologist but not having any one to follow through and implement the suggestions. Ultimately staff from this agency attempted "to create our own network for rehabilitation technology by developing specialists in our own agency." Timing also was mentioned as a problem; people often wait a long time following their assessments before they receive some equipment or technology.

Those SE directors who indicated they had not encountered problems locating or providing rehabilitation technology services either reported that they had in-house resources such as rehabilitation technology departments or rehabilitation engineers (N=8) or had adequate outside resources to draw upon (N=10), or had not needed to access rehabilitation technology services thus far (N=3).

PCA Services

When asked whether any individuals with severe physical disabilities had received personal care services (PCA) at the supported employment job sites, slightly more than one-third of the providers (38%) responded positively. Figure 9 presents the percentage of programs that utilized

# FIGURE 9
# FUNDING SOURCES UTILIZED FOR PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANT SERVICES



at least one of 4 funding sources for personal care services. The largest percentage (41% or 7 of those providing personal care services at the job sites) reported using "other" sources. These included: agency funds, private consumer funds, UCP funds, county dollars, and state Department of Social Service funds. State VR funds and Medicaid (Title XIX) funds were both used by six providers. Fewer respondents (4 providers or 24%) used Social Security funds, such as PASS or IWRE.

One-fourth of the providers (4 agencies) that provide personal care services at the job sites reported that no funding was available for these services. In these instances, the job coaches or coworkers typically provided the services. In one case, the job placement was made in close proximity to the rehabilitation facility so that PCA staff from the facility could provide the service. In another case, the need for PCA services precluded individualized placement into supported employment and group or enclave settings were used instead. This may have enhanced the efficiency of PCA service provision, but the tradeoff was reduced integration with nondisabled coworkers.

Title VI-C Regulations: Job Skill Training Requirement

Respondents were asked several questions that focused on potential barriers to employment that may exist in the federal Title VI-C supported employment regulations. One question asked whether the requirement specifying job skill training at least twice monthly has affected the number of individuals with severe physical disabilities who are determined eligible or served in supported employment. In general, the results were very similar to those reported in the state VR survey. For example, the majority of providers (51%) did not view the requirement as a problem for persons with severe physical disabilities, 36% said it was an impediment and 13% were not sure. A slightly higher percentage of state VR directors (42%) stated that the requirement created impediments to supported employment for this population. The percentage of providers (51%) who did not view the requirement as a barrier was similar to the percentage of state VR staff who responded likewise (48%). Ten percent of the state VR staff reportedly did not know whether the

requirement presented an obstacle for persons with severe disabilities, which may indicate a general lack of awareness regarding the impact of the supported employment regulations. Table 2 reveals the state-by-state distribution of the VR staff responses compared with providers' responses. Although the percentage who viewed this requirement as an impediment was similar across both samples, there was some inconsistency within individual states.

A variety of explanations were provided by respondents who said the regulation presents barriers. One-half (8 respondents) indicated that this population typically does not need job skill training twice a month, especially when the consumer does not have an associated cognitive impairment. Other providers (4) pointed to eligibility issues, noting that eligibility determination occurs at the local VR office level and that many individuals with severe physical disabilities may be screened out of supported employment due to the job skill training requirement. One respondent stated: "the regulations make VR staff question whether referrals are appropriate; they may not refer this population for this reason." One service provider reported that job skill training is required in their state only for consumers who have cognitive disabilities. Some providers conduct telephone follow-up with specific consumers, instead of visiting the job site, or they work on related support issues during worksite visits (as opposed to job skill training). Related supports that persons with severe physical disabilities typically receive at the work sites include: personal care services, social skills training/counseling, communicating with work-site supervisors, job development, communication assistance, transportation assistance, and job site accommodations. One respondent reported that this regulation forced their agency to use other funding sources for persons with severe physical disabilities. However, other programs in that particular state exclude persons with severe physical disabilities from supported employment services, because they do not have alternative funding available.

Title VI-C Regulations: Twenty Hour Per Week Requirement

The current Title VI-C supported employment regulations require persons to work 20 hours per week. Jobs at less than 20 hours are allowed only as competitive employment closures. We

TABLE 2

TITLE VI-C JOB SKILL TRAINING REQUIREMENT:
A BARRIER TO SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

| State | Supported Employment Programs | Vocational Rehabilitation Directors |
|---|---|---|
| Alabama | Yes | Yes |
| Alabama | | Yes |
| Arizona | Yes | |
| Arizona | DK | |
| Arizona | DK | |
| Arizona | | |
| Arizona | | |
| California | Yes | Yes |
| Connecticut | Yes | Yes |
| Connecticut | DK | Yes |
| Connecticut | | Yes |
| Florida | Yes | Yes |
| Georgia | | Yes |
| Idaho | Yes | |
| Idaho | Yes | |
| Idaho | DK | |
| Illinois | Yes | Yes |
| Illinois | DK | Yes |
| Illinois | | Yes |
| Iowa | Yes | |
| Massachusetts | | |
| Minnesota | Yes | Yes |
| Minnesota | | Yes |
| Minnesota | | Yes |
| Montana | | Yes |
| Nevada | | |
| New Jersey | | Yes |
| New Jersey | | Yes |
| New Jersey | | Yes |
| New York | Yes | |
| New York | | |
| New York | | |
| New York | | |
| N. Carolina | | |
| N. Carolina | | |
| Ohio | | Yes |
| Oregon | | Yes |
| Pennsylvania | Yes | DK |
| Rhode Island | | Yes |
| S. Dakota | Yes | |
| Texas | DK | Yes |
| Utah | Yes | |
| Virginia | Yes | |
| Washington | | |
| Wyoming | Yes | |

DK = Don't know

were interested in assessing the extent to which providers believe the 20 hour per week requirement creates an obstacle to supported employment for persons with severe physical disabilities. In general, this requirement was perceived as a larger problem than the job skill training requirement. For example, 62% reported that the requirement created a barrier to supported employment, 36% reported that it did not, and 2% indicated it was not applicable. The same percentage of state VR directors stated that the requirement was a problem (62%). The state-by-state distribution of their responses compared with provider responses is shown in Table 3. Once again, although the percentage who viewed the requirement as an impediment was similar across both samples, there was some discrepancy within states.

Comments from the 31 program staff who viewed this requirement as a barrier were examined and are categorized in Table 4. The largest percentage of respondents (29%) reported that persons with severe physical disabilities often may not have the stamina to work the 20 hour minimum per week. As one respondent noted: "Twenty hours may be a barrier to persons with severe physical disabilities, rather than providing opportunities for individuals to maximize their potential." An equal percentage of respondents (29%) reported that the 20 hour requirement also impedes the job development process, as many employers cannot always guarantee 20 hours per week, particularly in rural areas or in other economically depressed areas. Other respondents (21%) reported that a variety of related support needs (PCA, transportation, medical) create scheduling conflicts that interfere with obtaining jobs which approximate 20 hours per week. As one respondent remarked, "An arbitrary number of hours does not support individual needs." One state will waive this requirement with a doctor's statement that the individual's medical needs limit him/her to working less than 20 hours per week. Fear of losing Social Security benefits was reported as another factor that inhibits persons with severe physical disabilities from wanting to work 20 hours per week, even if they can physically handle the schedule. One provider admitted ignoring the 20 hour requirement: "Technically, our grant states that all people should be working 20 hours, but we worry about employment first and the number of hours second."

TABLE 3

TITLE VI-C TWENTY-HOUR MINIMUM: A BARRIER TO SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

| State | Supported Employment Programs | Vocational Rehabilitation Directors |
|---|---|---|
| Alabama | Yes | |
| Alabama | | |
| Arizona | Yes | Yes |
| Arizona | Yes | Yes |
| Arizona | | Yes |
| Arizona | | Yes |
| Arizona | | Yes |
| California | Yes | Yes |
| Connecticut | Yes | Yes |
| Connecticut | | Yes |
| Connecticut | | Yes |
| Florida | Yes | DK |
| Georgia | Yes | |
| Idaho | | Yes |
| Idaho | | Yes |
| Idaho | | Yes |
| Illinois | Yes | Yes |
| Illinois | Yes | Yes |
| Illinois | | Yes |
| Iowa | | Yes |
| Massachusetts | Yes | |
| Minnesota | Yes | Yes |
| Minnesota | Yes | Yes |
| Minnesota | | Yes |
| Montana | Yes | Yes |
| Nevada | | |
| New Jersey | Yes | |
| New Jersey | | |
| New Jersey | | |
| New York | Yes | Yes |
| New York | Yes | Yes |
| New York | Yes | Yes |
| New York | Yes | Yes |
| N. Carolina | Yes | Yes |
| N. Carolina | | Yes |
| Ohio | Yes | |
| Oregon | Yes | Yes |
| Pennsylvania | Yes | Yes |
| Rhode Island | Yes | Yes |
| S. Dakota | Yes | |
| Texas | Yes | Yes |
| Utah | Yes | Yes |
| Virginia | Yes | Yes |
| Washington | Yes | Yes |
| Wyoming | | Yes |

DK = Don't know

**Table 4**

**Reasons 20 Hour Requirement Is a Barrier**

| Reason | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Physical Endurance/Stamina Issues | 8 | 29% |
| Job Development Issues | 8 | 29% |
| Related Support Issues (e.g., PCA) | 6 | 21% |
| Fear of Losing Benefits | 3 | 11% |

Of the 16 respondents who reported they did not have problems with this requirement, two noted that employees work up to 20 hours instead of starting at 20 hours per week. Five other respondents said they have alternative funding sources for individuals who are not able to work 20 hours per week.

Similarly, respondents also were asked whether their supported employment program adheres to the 20 hour per week minimum for persons who are funded through other sources. The majority (69%) use the 20 hour minimum requirement for all supported employment participants, 29% do not, and one agency (2%) reportedly did not receive Title VI-C funding.

Other Issues Related to the Title VI-C Regulations

When asked whether other aspects of the Title VI-C supported employment regulations create barriers to supported employment eligibility for persons with severe physical disabilities, 17 respondents (37%) reported "yes", 15 (33%) stated "no" and 13 (29%) either did not know or do not receive Title VI-C funding. Five respondents noted that the requirement for securing funding for follow-up services acts as a barrier to persons with physical disabilities, because there is no designated agency that serves this population (unlike persons with mental retardation or mental illness). One provider referred to the eligibility definition: "Professionals who hold the funding purse strings are more interested in the number of successful closures. Title VI-C requires a determination of 'severe disability' yet provides narrow guidelines that actually determine people

are either 'too disabled' or they are not 'able to work a 20 hour week'. Yet, if neither of these is the case, they are often considered not disabled enough for supported employment!" State-level changes in the interpretation and implementation of the federal regulations was noted as another problem. One respondent mentioned a need for more flexibility in funding equipment or rehabilitation technology after VR funding ceases. This is problematic for Title VI-C funded programs, which (unlike services funded with 110 case dollars) prohibit the provision of post employment services following case closure.

Problems Related to the Provision of Ongoing Support Services

Respondents were asked to describe the issues or problems encountered in providing ongoing support services to persons with severe physical disabilities. Table 5 presents this information in order of frequency according to the major categories noted by respondents: transportation, lack of funding, limitations in the federal regulations, no designated funding agency, and rehabilitation technology needs.

Miscellaneous Issues

When asked whether there were any additional problems or issues related to providing supported employment services to individuals with severe physical disabilities, respondents most often mentioned the need for employer awareness and education. (See Table 6 for the responses to this question). A sizeable number of respondents (N=13) spoke of a need to address employer attitudes and allay their fears related to employing persons with severe physical disabilities. One respondent stated that employers are afraid that persons with severe physical disabilities will be injured at work, which generates insurance and liability concerns. The issue mentioned second in frequency was, again, the need for ongoing support funds (9 respondents). Some respondents (N=6) spoke of the need to educate the public in general about the employment potential of persons with severe physical disabilities. One individual suggested that government agencies need to advocate more aggressively around employment issues affecting persons with disabilities. SE Directors also mentioned job development and job restructuring as issues affecting this population.

**Table 5**

**Problems in Providing Ongoing Supports to Persons with Severe Physical Disabilities**

| Problem | Employment | | Providers | State VR | | Staff |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | # | | % | # | | % |
| Transportation | 18 | | 40% | -- | | -- |
| Lack of funding | 10 | | 22% | 31 | | 62% |
| Limitations of the federal regulations | 8 | | 18% | 4 | | 9% |
| No designated agency for this population | 5 | | 11% | 19 | | 38% |
| Rehabilitation. engineering needs | 1 | | 2% | 6 | | 12% |

as the kinds of available jobs often are not well-suited to persons with physical disabilities. It was noted that job development is especially difficult given the changing job market and the downturn in many local economies. Fear of losing benefits, particularly Social Security benefits, and disincentives within the Social Security system were mentioned by 5 respondents. Other providers (N=5) reported a need to develop new strategies and expertise regarding supported employment services for this population. Other issues mentioned were: integrating persons with severe physical disabilities into the community, a lack of agencies specializing in services for this population, and general fragmentation of supported employment services. One respondent stated that the absence of a universal definition of severe disability leads to gaps in service provision. Many also took the opportunity to reiterate issues mentioned earlier, such as PCA services, transportation, rehabilitation technology, and barriers in the Title VI-C requirements affecting services to persons with severe physical disabilities.



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**Table 6**

**Other Issues Related to Supported Employment Services for Persons with Physical Disabilities**

| Issue | # Respondents | % Respondents |
|---|---|---|
| Employer Attitudes/Fears | 13 | 29% |
| Lack of Ongoing Support Resources | 9 | 20% |
| Need for Public Education | 6 | 13% |
| Job Development Issues | 6 | 13% |
| Social Security Disincentives | 5 | 11% |
| Lack of Expertise with this Population | 5 | 11% |
| Other | 8 | 18% |

## Discussion

The Discussion section is organized around six major themes. These include: characteristics of the supported employment population, models utilized, related support services (i.e., rehabilitation technology, PCA, ongoing supports), the influence of the Title VI-C supported employment regulations on services for persons with severe physical disabilities, eligibility issues, and other issues affecting supported employment.

### Supported Employment Population Served

Key findings related to the population served by the participating supported employment providers include:

- The percentage of persons with severe physical disabilities served by the supported employment providers increased from 28% in 1989 to 30% in 1990;
- Persons with severe physical disabilities were less likely to be served in the individual placement model (56% of the total) compared with the percentage reported by state VR SE directors (85%);
- Ten percent of the sample were working concurrently in segregated settings and in integrated, supported employment programs.

The supported employment providers included in this study clearly have more experience than most in serving individuals with severe physical disabilities, with one-third of their population meeting these criteria. This is significantly higher than the average percentage with severe physical disabilities reported in the state VR survey during 1989 and 1990 (4.5% and 5.7%; Kiernan et al., 1991). Although it is difficult to estimate the number of persons with severe physical disabilities in the general population, the percentage reported by state VR agencies (5.7%) may be smaller than the percentage of potential candidates for these programs. However, one complicating factor is that individuals with both physical and cognitive disabilities may be classified with a primary disability of a cognitive nature due to the greater availability of ongoing support resources in state MR/DD agencies. Further research needs to be conducted regarding the number of individuals

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with severe physical disabilities who are not receiving, but who could benefit from, supported employment services.

It is encouraging that the total number of individuals with severe physical disabilities served by the supported employment providers increased by 31% from 1989 to 1990. This was even more substantial than the 22% increase in all supported employment consumers.

Supported Employment Models

Utilization rates for the various supported employment models were compared with those reported in two other studies: the survey of state VR staff (Kiernan et al., 1991) and a study conducted by Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) (Wehman et al., 1989). Respondents to the current survey reported that 56% of the supported employees with physical disabilities were in individual placement settings, whereas state VR agencies reported a much higher individual placement rate of 85% for this population. The VCU study documented an individual placement rate of 52% for all individuals served in supported employment nationally (Wehman et al., 1989). In spite of the lower individual placement rate documented in the provider survey, almost two-thirds of the responding providers (62%) used only the individual placement model.

The data reported by state VR agencies were not independently verified. Initially, we believed that the more extensive use of the individual placement model (as reported by state VR agencies) could reflect a greater need for highly individualized services by persons with severe physical disabilities (such as personal care supports, job site modifications, rehabilitation technology, etc.). It is possible that individual placements may decrease as agencies serve a larger percentage of persons with severe physical disabilities served; the responding providers served a much larger percentage compared with the average reported by state VR agencies. As one respondent noted, it may be easier to provide certain support services (such as PCA services) when individuals with physical disabilities are working in small groups.

Another factor which potentially may explain the different individual placement rates is the source of supported employment funding. The survey of state VR agencies focused on supported

employment programs funded through Vocational Rehabilitation. Although the largest percentage of providers (93%) received VR funds for the training phase of supported employment, 64% also accessed monies from the state MR/DD agency and 42% mentioned a variety of other sources. These sources may have fewer restrictions related to utilizing group models of supported employment.

There is a need for additional research focusing on factors related to the use of group versus individual placements. The individual placement approach typically offers greater flexibility for maximizing individual interests and skills as well as more opportunities for integration with nondisabled coworkers. It is important to identify the extent to which these advantages are being sacrificed due to a lack of available support resources.

Another important issue related to the placement approach is the concurrent use of segregated employment for persons also employed in integrated, supported employment settings. Approximately 10% of those in supported employment also were working in sheltered employment or day habilitation environments. Typically, this practice was attributed to a lack of work or to part-time integrated work schedules which conflicted with the need for a full-time schedule during the day. We need to determine whether this practice represents an acceptable alternative for persons with severe disabilities. Future studies could compare a variety of outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction and social integration) for individuals working concurrently in both settings with those working only in integrated settings. Furthermore, alternatives to segregated work need to be explored for persons who work part-time in integrated employment (such as volunteer work or utilizing community resources like the library or recreation facilities).

Related Support Services

Findings regarding related support services (transportation, personal care assistance, and rehabilitation technology issues) include:

- Transportation issues continue to present major barriers to employment for persons with severe physical disabilities;

- The major impediments involving rehabilitation technology services were related to funding problems or a lack of resources;
- Only one-third of the respondents had provided personal care services to individuals in supported employment;
- In some cases, the need for PCA services precluded use of the individual placement model; and
- Identification of resources for ongoing supports is problematic for persons with physical disabilities.

As noted, transportation continues to present major barriers to employment for individuals with physical disabilities, with three-fourths of the respondents identifying transportation problems in four different categories. Transportation issues, particularly in rural areas, also presented impediments for participants of UCPA's National Supported Employment Demonstration Project (West et al., 1991). A variety of creative methods are being used by local programs to address the lack of transportation resources and to stimulate related systems-change activities. The passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990, with its provisions for accessible transportation, should stimulate the long-term development of transportation resources for individuals with disabilities.

All respondents, except one, had utilized rehabilitation technology services for individuals in supported employment work-sites. VR funds were used most frequently to finance these services. However, there was a discrepancy between state VR staff and supported employment providers regarding the availability of rehabilitation technology funds. Only two-thirds of the supported employment providers reported that funds were available for rehabilitation technology services compared with 92% of the state VR staff. Rehabilitation technology services are more difficult to obtain following supported employment case closure, given the ruling by the General Counsel of the Department of Education that VR post employment services are not available to supported employees. Thus, a partial explanation regarding the discrepancy is the fact that state VR staff do not have direct experience with funding problems which result after VR case closure. This will change if the newly proposed Title VI-C employment regulations are enacted. (See page 39 for a detailed description.)

A recent survey of United Cerebral Palsy Affiliate Organizations revealed that assistive technology service needs often do not receive adequate attention during the eligibility determination process (Simpson & Button, 1991). As noted: "Almost two-thirds of the (66) respondents reported that assistive technology either was not considered, they were uncertain if it was considered or it was inconsistently addressed in the determination of 'feasibility' for rehabilitation services. The considerable number of comments made by affiliates regarding the assistive technology issue focused on the state VR agencies' lack of experience, knowledge and value of this support for people with cerebral palsy." (Simpson & Button, 1991; p.2). VR counselors are required to consider assistive technology needs when determining feasibility for employment. One respondent suggested that more stringent enforcement mechanisms should be added to this section of the Vocational Rehabilitation case service regulations. Affiliates also reported that personal care assistance services, transportation assistance, environmental adaptation and assistive technology devices were least likely (of the federal VR programs) to be available through Title VI-C-funded supported employment.

Providers reported that PCA services were funded about equally with VR (35%), Medicaid Waiver (35%), Social Security (24%) and "other" sources (41%). In comparison, state VR staff indicated that VR funds were the primary funding source for PCA services (75%) followed by Medicaid (59%). As with rehabilitation technology services, use of Title VI-C funds for other supports is prohibited following VR case closure. The agencies that fund ongoing supports may not have resources to fund services like personal care assistance. Moreover, although 35% of the providers and 59% of the state VR staff reported that Medicaid funds are used for these services, the Health Care Financing Administration typically restricts PCA services to home-based, except for individuals served under the Medicaid Home and Community-based Services Waiver. Not all states currently participate in the waiver program, and the number of individuals served is still somewhat limited.



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The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 (OBRA, Sections 4720 & 4721) would allow PCA services to be provided outside the home for all states as of 1994. (Minnesota currently is serving as a pilot state for this legislation.) PCA services, an option under federal Medicaid guidelines, currently are provided as an "optional" in-home service by 28 states to consumers not on the waiver. The OBRA legislation, as currently enacted, makes the provision of these services mandatory in all states as of 1994. Barring any changes in this legislation, funding availability for PCA services at the job-site should increase substantially in 1994, a fact that may have a significant impact on the number of persons with severe physical disabilities who are able to secure and maintain employment.

Other potential funding sources for supports such as personal care assistance following case closure are VR Title 110 monies (under the post-employment service provision) and Independent Living (Part B) dollars. The latter may well represent an underutilized resource that could be used to expand the number of individuals with severe physical disabilities in supported employment.

Development of ongoing support mechanisms and funding resources is a critical issue for all persons in supported employment. For individuals with severe physical disabilities, this is complicated by the absence of a clearly identified agency responsible for providing follow-up supports. If there is no cognitive impairment, persons with severe physical disabilities often are not eligible for services with state Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities agencies. A similar scenario exists with the state Mental Health agency when there is no accompanying psychiatric disability. Thus, agencies which typically provide ongoing supports often cannot be accessed by individuals with severe physical disabilities. In fact, the lack of funding for the ongoing support phase of supported employment may restrict the eligibility determination for individuals with severe physical disabilities.

Title VI-C Regulations

The following findings relate to the Title VI-C Supported Employment regulations:

- (As with the survey of state VR staff) providers were more likely to perceive the 20 hour minimum requirement as a problem (62%) compared with the job skill training requirement (36%);
- Other respondents noted that both the job skill training requirement and the 20 hour per week requirement may negatively affect eligibility determination for individuals with severe physical disabilities; and
- The lack of post-employment services for persons closed in supported employment was viewed as a problem for this population, because it restricts access to specific services (such as upgrades in assistive technology or repair of previously purchased assistive devices).

The federal supported employment regulations have received substantial attention recently. In the spring of 1990, the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) requested public review and comment of the existing regulations. As with the study findings, the rules that have received the most public attention are the 20 hour per week requirement and the requirement for job skill training at least twice a month. Comments were reviewed by general counsel and recently issued as proposed rules (Federal Register, Nov. 13, 1991). Final rules should be issued in 1992.

Approximately one-third of the supported employment providers (as well as one-third of the state VR staff) described the job skill training requirement as a barrier to supported employment for individuals with severe physical disabilities. In addition, this requirement may restrict eligibility determination.

The proposed rules offer a positive modification of the job-skill training requirement. Specifically, the requirement was replaced with a more flexible requirement for supports on and off the job, which will be monitored at the work-site. This revision should provide the flexibility to enable individuals with physical disabilities to receive the necessary supports.

The 20 hour per week minimum requirement was viewed as an even more significant barrier, with 62% of both groups of respondents describing it as an impediment. As with the job skill training requirement, the 20 hour minimum also may inhibit eligibility determination. West et

al. (1991) also referred to problems in locating positions with at least 20 hours per week for participants of UCPA's National Employment Demonstration Project.

The 20 hour per week requirement is no longer required at the time of job placement in the recently proposed rules, but instead, must be achieved by the time of transition to extended services. Although this is an improvement over the previous rule, the findings from this study indicate that this interpretation will continue to create problems for some individuals with physical disabilities (i.e., those who are unable to work up to 20 hour per week).

Another revision with potential implications for individuals with severe physical disabilities is the access to post-transition or post-closure services for individuals closed in supported employment. These services must be "discrete, individually determined" and "not duplicative of services provided during the extended services phase of supported employment" (Federal Register, November 13, 1991). Discrete services have not been defined specifically, but appear to allow for rehabilitation technology services, such as job station accommodations, assistive technology repair and maintenance, and upgrading assistive technology devices.

Eligibility Issues

At least one respondent commented that she had referred individuals with severe physical disabilities to the VR system for supported employment services, but they were not referred back to her agency. She assumed that these individuals had been screened out as ineligible for services. A recent survey of UCPA affiliate agencies provides supporting evidence regarding eligibility determination problems. For example, "more than a third of the UCP affiliates responded that people with substantial disability continue to be found "non-feasible for employment" (Simpson & Button, 1991; p.2). UCPA affiliates also were asked to describe their overall satisfaction with the VR supported employment programs in terms of responsiveness to and support for persons with substantial physical disabilities resulting from cerebral palsy. One-third rated the program as poor, 34% rated it fair, 27% described it as good, and only 4% rated the program as excellent.

Miscellaneous Issues

In spite of the fact that supported employment has been the focus of federal initiatives since 1985, there appears to be a strong need for increased public relations and education related to the employment of persons with severe disabilities. The passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) with its focus on equal employment opportunities makes public education even more critical over the next few years. The technical assistance activities that will be linked to the ADA should focus specifically on addressing the fears and concerns of employers.

Another important issue affecting supported employment services is the overall fragmentation within the service delivery system. This is particularly noticeable for populations like those with severe physical disabilities who fall between the cracks with respect to ongoing support services. Unfortunately, this fragmentation affects more than just supported employment services and underscores the liabilities inherent in a categorical service delivery system.

Finally, the discrepancies between the state VR staff and local providers need to be mentioned. First, VR staff seemed more optimistic regarding the availability of rehabilitation technology funding and, second, although the percentage who viewed the Title VI-C requirements as problems was similar across both groups, there were inconsistencies within some states. The discrepancy regarding rehabilitation technology funding is particularly critical, given the UCPA affiliate survey findings that rehabilitation technology needs often are not considered during the eligibility screening process. There are apparent communication gaps between the state and local levels that need to be addressed related to rehabilitation technology funding. The inconsistencies with respect to the effect of the Title VI-C requirements are less serious, as these are more subjective issues that depend, partly, on experience with the regulations. However, it is disconcerting that 10% of the state VR respondents did not know whether the job skill training requirement presents problems for individuals with severe physical disabilities.



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## Summary

In general, the two surveys of supported employment for individuals with severe physical disabilities have verified that these individuals are working in supported employment settings. However, the number of individuals with physical disabilities who actually receive this service may be lower than the number who potentially could benefit from it. Approximately 5.7% of those served nationally in supported employment during FY 1990 had a severe physical disability; however, the supported employment provider survey documented a much higher percentage (30%) with severe physical disabilities. These providers have demonstrated that it is possible to serve a substantial number of individuals with severe physical disabilities in supported employment.

One issue that needs further examination is whether the utilization of small group models increases with the percentage of individuals with severe physical disabilities served. This appeared to be the situation with the sample of supported employment providers. PCA needs and rehabilitation technology needs may negatively affect use of the individual placement model for this population. If this is true, alternatives for maximizing the benefits inherent in the individual placement approach need to be identified.

The challenge facing supported employment is the development of a wide range of services which will allow persons with severe physical disabilities to become more independent through employment. Current regulations appear to inhibit this type of flexible service development, particularly the job skill training requirement, the minimum hour requirement, and the absence of post-employment services following case closure. These regulations also may restrict the eligibility determination process. These specific issues need to be addressed in the revised regulations. The status of the PCA federal legislation with its 1994 implementation date also should continue to be monitored, as it offers a potentially significant solution to the provision of PCA services.

In addition, access to assistive technology must improve in practice. In spite of reports that states are beginning to implement technology plans and provide funding for increasing numbers of persons with physical disabilities, in reality, these funds are not routinely available during the determination of employment feasibility and during initial employment (Simpson & Button, 1991). Furthermore, we need to examine (as indicated by some of the qualitative comments) the extent to which individuals with severe physical disabilities actually are found ineligible for supported employment due to a lack of available support resources, such as rehabilitation technology or personal care assistance.

In conclusion, supported employment programs across the country are serving larger numbers of individuals with severe physical disabilities. In general, these individuals present a unique set of service needs which currently challenge existing system configurations, including funding mechanisms, support resources, and regulatory provisions. As discussed, a variety of modifications need to be addressed and support resources solidified before these individuals are likely to represent a substantial percentage of the total in supported employment nationally.

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Appendix A:

Supported Employment Survey:
Individuals with Severe Physical Disabilities

# Supported Employment Survey
## Individuals with Severe Physical Disabilities

Name of Organization:_____

Address: _____

_____

Name of Person Completing Survey:_____

Title_____ Telephone: (___)_____

**Instructions**
This survey will be conducted as a phone interview in order to reduce the effort required on your part and to enhance the quality of the information received.
***Please review the survey questions prior to the phone interview.***

This study focuses on supported employment services for individuals who:

- have a severe physical disability (e.g., cerebral palsy, quadriplegia, spina bifida, head injury if there are severe physical symptoms); and
- because of these disabilities, require on-going job related supports such as: personal care assistance, communication assistance, job accommodation, rehabilitation technology, mobility assistance, etc.) in order to maintain employment in an integrated setting

1. How many years has your organization provided day and employment services to individuals with disabilities?

_____

2. Please indicate, by checking the appropriate line, which of the following day/employment services are offered by your organization:

A. _____Time-limited Training for Competitive Employment
- Environment where **most** workers do **not** have disabilities
- **Time limited** job-related supports are provided to workers with disability in order to maintain employment

B. _____Supported Employment (*with ongoing support*)
- Environment where **most** workers do **not** have disabilities (maximum of eight individuals with disabilities at a single work site)
- **Ongoing** job-skills supports are provided to the worker with a disability (a minimum of 2 times a month) in order to maintain employment

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C. _____Sheltered Employment/Work Activity
- Environment where **all** workers have disabilities
- Continuous job-related supports and supervision are provided to all workers with disabilities

D. _____Day Activity/Day Habilitation
- Environment where **all** participants have disabilities
- Primary program focus: psychosocial skills, activities of daily living, recreation, and professional therapies
- Continuous support and supervision are provided to all participants with disabilities

3. Please list the average number of persons that your agency served per day in day and employment services during 1990.

_____(_____ Based on data_____estimate)

4. A.) What is the total number of persons served in your agency's supported employment program during 1989?

_____(_____ Based on data_____estimate)

B.) What is the total number of persons served in your agency's supported employment program during 1990?

_____ (_____ Based on data_____estimate)

5. Of the individuals currently served in your agency's supported employment program, how many have a **primary disability** in the following categories:

_____Mental retardation

_____Psychiatric

_____Cerebral Palsy

_____TBI/Head injury

_____Spina Bifida

_____Spinal Cord Injury

_____Other **physical** disability

_____Other disability

6. In your agency, which of the following sources currently are utilized to fund your agency's supported employment program? (*Check all that apply*)

_____Vocational Rehabilitation funds
_____Department of Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities funds
_____Department of Mental Health funds
_____Department of Education funds
_____Other state agency funds (*Please specify*_____)
_____Medicaid (Title XIX) Waiver funds
_____County/Local funds
_____Self pay, Social Security PASS, IWRE
_____Other (*Please specify*_____)

7. A.) What is the total number of individuals with **severe physical disabilities** (*see definition on page 1)* served in your agency's supported employment program during 1989?

_____(_____ Based on data_____estimate)

B.) What is the total number of individuals with **severe physical disabilities** served in your agency's supported employment program during 1990?

_____(_____ Based on data_____estimate)

C.) Please list the number of individuals with **severe physical disabilities** who entered (new placements) your agency's supported employment program during 1990.

_____(_____ Based on data_____estimate)

D.) How many individuals with **severe physical disabilities** were terminated (i.e. received no follow-up supports) from your agency's supported employment program in 1990?

_____(_____ Based on data_____estimate)

8. For persons with **severe physical disabilities** currently served in your agency's supported employment program, which of the following sources are utilized to fund ongoing support services? (*Please check all that apply.*)

_____Vocational Rehabilitation funds
_____Department of MR/DD funds
_____Department of Mental Health funds
_____Department of Education funds
_____Medicaid (Title XIX) Waiver funds
_____Other state agency funds (*Please specify*_____)
_____County/Local funds
_____Self pay, Social Security PASS, IWRE
_____Other (*Please specify*_____)

9. A.) What issues or problems has your agency encountered in providing ongoing support services to individuals with **severe physical disabilities**?

B.) What strategies have you used to resolve these problems?

10. Of the individuals with **severe physical disabilities** served in your agency's supported employment program during 1990, how many were employed in each of these models?

_____Individual placement (_____based on data _____estimate _____don't know)

_____Enclave (_____based on data _____estimate _____don't know)

_____Mobile crew (_____based on data _____estimate _____don't know)

_____Small business (_____based on data _____estimate _____don't know)

_____Other (please describe:_____)
(_____based on data _____estimate _____don't know)

11. How many individuals with **severe physical disabilities** who are currently working in your agency's supported employment program are also attending one of the following settings part time?

Sheltered employment/work activity_____
Day habilitation/day activity _____

12. A.) Please check below the issues that have affected transportation services to supported employment worksites for persons with **severe physical disabilities.** (*Check all that apply.*)

_____Have experienced no problems
_____Availability of public transportation
_____Availability of private or state contracted transportation
_____Lack of accessible public transportation (lifts, ramps)
_____Limited routes/proximity to work site
_____Limited scheduling/incompatible with work hours
_____Other (*Please specify*)

B.) What strategies have you used to resolve these problems?

13. A.) Please check the rehabilitation technologies that have been utilized at your agency's supported employment work sites with individuals with **severe physical disabilities**.

_____Have not utilized rehabilitation technologies
_____Mobility devices
_____Communication devices such as Minispeak, speech generation
_____Prostheses
_____Equipment such as computers, adaptive telephones
_____Work station accommodation
_____Job site accommodation
_____Building modification
_____Job restructuring

B.) Which of the following has your agency accessed for the provision of rehabilitation technology services to indivduals with **severe physical disabilities**?

_____Have not utilized rehabilitation technologies
_____Occupational therapists
_____Physical therapists
_____Rehabilitation engineers
_____Interdisciplinary rehabilitation technology centers
_____Assistive technology databases (such as Job Accommodation, Able Data)
_____Other (*Please specify*)

14. Has your agency encountered any problems in locating or providing rehabilitation technology services to individuals with **severe physical disabilities** in supported employment?

_____Yes _____No

Please explain.

15. What funding sources have been utilized by your agency to provide rehabilitation technology to individuals with **severe physical disabilities** who are working in supported employment? (*Check all that apply*)

_____VR funds
_____Other state agency funds(*Please specify*_____)
_____Medicaid (Title XIX)
_____Other (*Please specify*_____)
_____Not applicable

16. A.) Have any individuals with **severe physical disabilities** received personal care services at the supported employment job sites monitored by your agency?

_____Yes _____No (*Skip to question 17*)

B.) If yes, what sources have been utilized to fund this service? (*Please check all that apply*)

_____ State VR Agency
_____ Medicaid (Title XIX) Waiver funds
_____ Social Security (PASS, IWRE)
_____ Other (*Please specify*_____)
_____ No funding available

C.) If funding is not available, how are PCA needs addressed at the job site for individuals with **severe physical disabilities** in supported employment?

17. A.) Have you experienced difficulties in arranging funding to provide PCA services during the ongoing support phase of supported employment?

_____Yes _____No (*Skip to question 18*)

B.). Please describe these problems and any strategies you have used to address them:

Federal Title VI-C supported employment regulations state that participants should require intensive on-going support services in order to maintain integrated employment. Ongoing support services are defined as continuous or periodic **job skill training** services provided at least twice monthly at the work site throughout the term of employment. Other support services provided at or away from the job site are allowed, as long as **job skill training** is needed.

18. A). Has the requirement for job skill training described in the Title VI-C regulations affected the number of individuals with **severe physical disabilities** who are determined eligible or are served in your agency's supported employment program?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't know

B.) If yes, please explain.

19. A.) Does your organization adhere to the minimum of 20 hours per week as stipulated in the Title VI-C regulations for individuals with **severe physical disabilities** who are working in your agency's supported employment program?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't know

B.) In your agency, does the 20 hour per week requirement in the Title VI-C supported employment regulations create an obstacle to supported employment for persons with **severe physical disabilities**? (*Please explain.*)

_____ Yes _____ No

20. A.) In your opinion, are there other aspects of the Title VI-C supported employment regulations that create additional barriers to supported employment eligibility for persons with **severe physical disabilities**?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't know

B.) If yes, please explain.

21. Are there any other problems or issues that you experience related to providing supported employment services to individuals with **severe physical disabilities**? Please describe.

*Thank you for your participation in this study!*

Appendix B:

Responding Supported Employment Providers

Serving Persons with Severe Physical Disabilities

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